

## A NEW GENUS AND SPECIES OF BIRD OF PARADISE.

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*(By Permission of the Trustees of The Australian Museum.)*TAENIAPARADISEA, *gen. nov.*

Bill straight, normal as in *Astrapia* and *Pseudastrapia*, but the culmen is only 25 mm. in length. The feathering of the forehead extends onto the culmen forming a dense tuft of velvet pile. Exposed portion of culmen only 10 mm. in length. Tail graduated, the rectrices with sharp-pointed triangular tips. In the male the two central rectrices are extremely long and narrow, being ribbon-like and three times as long as the head and body. These rectrices are white with a black and pointed tip. It is by these ribbon-like feathers that the bird can be at once distinguished from any other bird of paradise.

TAENIAPARADISEA MACNICOLLI, *sp. nov.*

McNicol's Ribbon-tailed Bird of Paradise.

(Plates xxv.-xxvi.)

Description of male: Plumage above and below, velvet-like, black with a metallic brass-green tinge on the mantle and back, changing into purplish and blue on the rump and upper tail coverts. Tail graduated, the rectrices all pointed; brown in colour, with an indistinct purplish sheen under favourable light. The two central feathers are ribbon-like, three times as long as head and body, and are white with a black pointed tip. The top of the head, frontal tuft, nape and underside of the throat bright metallic green shot with blue. These metallic feathers are not so scale-like as in other closely related species. A black, green-tinged velvety tuft extends well along the culmen, and a similar one about half way along the lower mandible. There is a small but definite patch of metallic blue-green on the bend of the wing which changes to violet on the lesser under-wing coverts. There is a narrow band of fiery copper colour across the breast. The upper breast is metallic like the back. Abdomen with a very dark green tinge over velvety black. The wings are brown with an indistinct purplish gloss. The sixth and seventh primaries are equal and longest, the first falling short of the tip by about 68 mm. Colour of eye unknown, but the bill and legs are blackish. The measurements of the Holotype and Paratypes are as follows:—

|            | Culmen | Tarsus | Wing | Tail | Total | length  | White   |
|------------|--------|--------|------|------|-------|---------|---------|
|            |        |        |      |      |       |         | tail    |
|            |        |        |      |      |       |         | plumes. |
| Holotype.  |        |        |      |      |       |         |         |
| 0.37058 .. | 25     | 44     | 176  | 120  | 320   | approx. | 920     |
| Paratype.  |        |        |      |      |       |         |         |
| 0.37059 .. | 26     | 46     | 177  | 116  | 320   | „       | 820     |
| Paratype.  |        |        |      |      |       |         |         |
| 0.37060 .. | 25     | 45     | 175  | 120  | 320   | „       | 920     |

Owing to the density of the feather tuft on the culmen, this measurement is indefinite.

Female: The female is reported as being a brown bird with a short tail. Nothing more than this is known.

Affinities: Whilst I have compared *Taeniaparadisea* either with descriptions or specimens of several species of *Astrapia*, *Parotia*, *Lamprothorax*, *Paradigalla* and *Epimachus*, in order to calculate the value of its various characters, it cannot be regarded in any way as closely related to, or connecting any two of them. Perhaps its nearest ally is *Astrapia splendidissima*.

Quite apart from the extraordinary ribbon-like tail of *Taeniaparadisea*, the velvety feathers of the mantle are quite 45 mm. in length as against an average of about twenty-five in the genera mentioned. A glance at the form of the tail will show that, whilst the rectrices are pointed, they are shaped more like those of *Epimachus ellioti* than of any other species, whilst the tuft on the culmen resembles that of *Parotia duivenbodei*. *Astrapia splendidissima* has much the same general colouring, though much brighter and more striking, but *Astrapia* has a squarish tail with rounded tips. It will be seen, therefore, that *Taeniaparadisea* is an unique bird in more than one respect, and must be placed in a genus by itself.

Habitat: The highlands of Central New Guinea in the Hagen-Sepik District, 8,000 to 10,000 feet above sea level.

Described from three specimens collected by Messrs J. L. Taylor and J. R. Black, leaders of the Hagen-Sepik Patrol, and presented to the Trustees of the Australian Museum by the Administrator, Sir Walter Ramsay McNicoll, after whom the species is named.

Notes: The following field notes were supplied by Mr. J. L. Taylor, Assistant District Officer, who, with Mr. J. R. Black, obtained the birds, and who supplied the accompanying map showing the exact location, or area in which the species occurs.

"BIRD OF PARADISE (Long white tailed species).

This bird was observed in the forested ranges of the main cordillera west and north west of Mt. Hagen between longitude 143 degrees 30 minutes east, and 142 degrees 30 minutes east, on both sides of the Strickland (Fly)-Yuat (Sepik) watershed. It is possible that the bird will be found further west in the Star mountains of Dutch New Guinea. The species appears to be confined to altitudes between 8,000 and 10,000 feet above sea level, and is more numerous at 9,000 feet than at any other height.

There are not very many of them but one meets them here and there in the high forest. They make a clicking or hammering sound something like a pneumatic riveter at work, and appear to have some difficulty in flying; the long tails being an encumbrance. Their flight is slow and jerky, and over short distances only. In display, they jump from branch to branch raising the tail slightly.

The female, speaking from memory, is a light brown in colour, with a shorter tail, perhaps only six inches in length.

The local people (natives) know the bird as Yaka Yan-gi, yaka meaning bird.

In the accompanying map, the shaded portion indicates the area in which the species was observed."

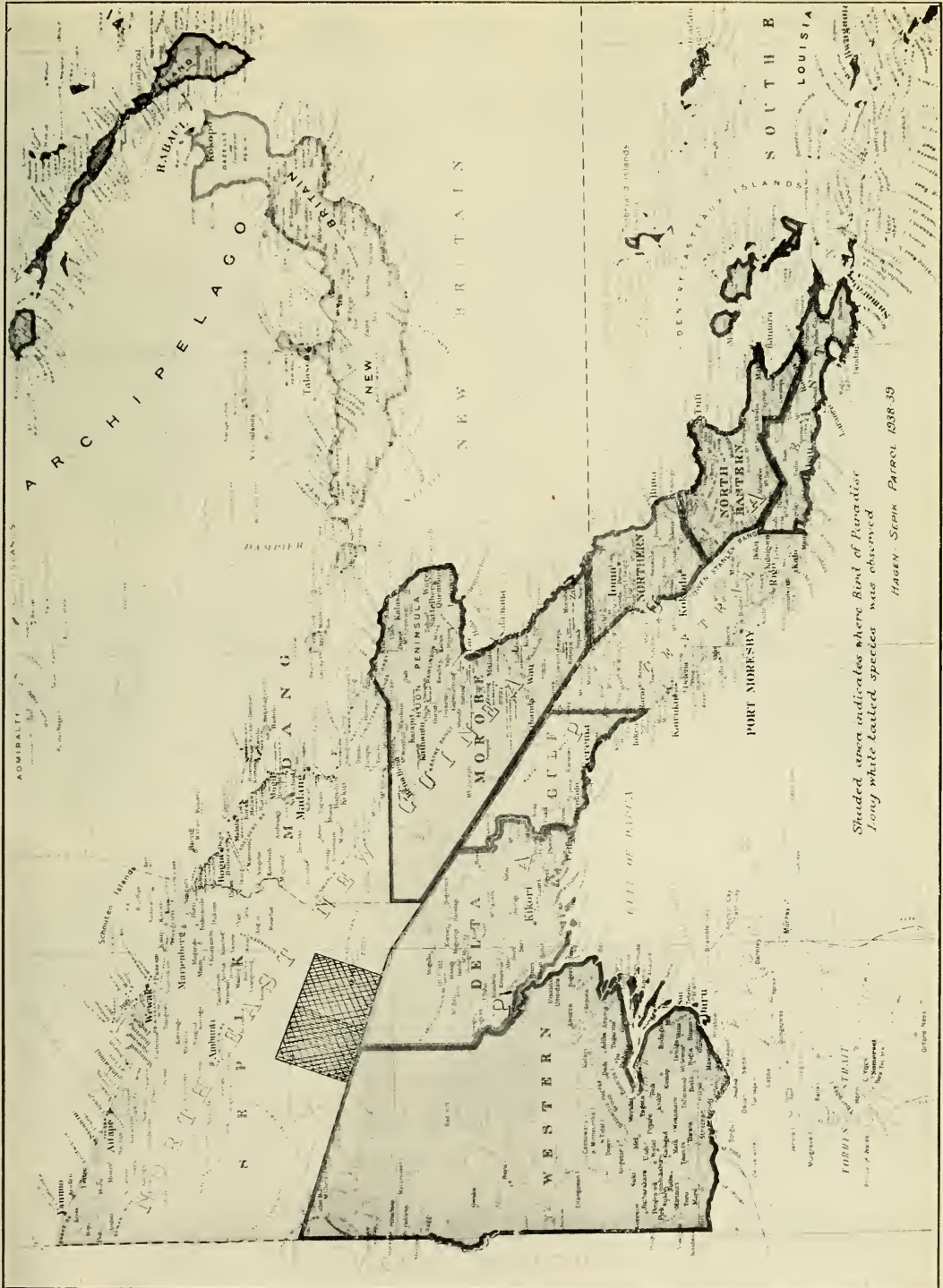
#### DESCRIPTION OF PLATES XXV AND XXVI.

Plate xxv. *Taeniaparadisea macnicolli* Kinghorn. In oval, Bird without tail feathers. In background complete figure of bird circa 1/3rd natural size. Lilian Medland, del.

Plate xxvi. Map showing by shading locality where type specimen was collected.



*Taeniapardisea macnicolli* Kinghorn.



Map showing type locality (shaded) of *Taeniaparadisea macnicolli* Kinghorn.